

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PRESS MATERIAL

1. HERewith FULL TEXT JOHN SAAR BYLINER WASHINGTON POST
WEDNESDAY, DEC. 29, HEADED "SEOUL CONCILIATORY TO U.S. IN
BRIBERY, BUGGING DISPUTE."

2. SEOUL, DEC. 28--THE SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT, IN AN
UNEXPECTEDLY CONCILIATORY STATEMENT, SAID TODAY IT HAS
ACCEPTED PRIVATE U.S. ASSURANCES THAT THE UNITED STATES DID
NOT USE ELECTRONIC SURVEILLANCE IN THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE
OF PRESIDENT PARK CHUNG HEE.

3. THE GOVERNMENT STATEMENT ENDED A TWO-MONTH NEWS
BLACKOUT IN SOUTH KOREA ON THE SERIES OF PROBLEMS THAT HAVE
ARISEN BETWEEN SEOUL AND WASHINGTON, ITS CHIEF ECONOMIC
AND MILITARY ALLY. IT ALSO DETAILED SOUTH KOREA'S EFFORTS
TO GAIN ACCESS TO ONE OF ITS INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS WHO HAS
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REQUESTED ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES.

4. THE STATEMENT DEALT LESS DIRECTLY WITH ALLEGATIONS
THAT KOREAN BUSINESSMAN TONGSUN PARK MASTERMINDED, ON
BEHALF OF PRESIDENT PARK, A MULTIMILION-DOLLAR SCHEME TO
BUY THE SUPPORT OF U.S. CONGRESSMEN. THE STATEMENT, WHICH

GENERALLY PRESENTED A HIGHLY SELECTIVE ACCOUNT TO THE KOREAN PUBLIC, REFERRED TO THE INFLUENCE-BUYING ALLEGATIONS SIMPLY AS "A CASE INVOLVING TONGSUN PARK."

5. FOREIGN MINISTER PARK TON JIN, WHO ISSUED THE STATEMENT, SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED TO DOCUMENT ITS "EFFORTS TO AMICABLY SETTLE THE PROBLEMS" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES BECAUSE IT FELT THAT "PROLONGATION OF THE SITUATION WOULD NOT SERVE THE LONG-TERM COMMON INTERESTS" OF EITHER SIDE. THE STATEMENT REAFFIRMED THE "TRADITIONAL BOND OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES."

6. THE CONCILIATORY TONE AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF IMPRECISE PRIVATE U.S. ASSURANCES MARKS A SUBSTANTIAL RETREAT FOR SOUTH KOREA FROM A DEC. 9 STATEMENT IN WHICH THE KOREANS DEMANDED AN OFFICIAL PUBLIC DENIAL BY WASHINGTON OF ALLEGATIONS THAT THE UNITED STATES MAY HAVE BUGGED THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE.

7. THE WASHINGTON POST REPORTED IN OCTOBER THAT "HIGHLY SENSITIVE" INTELLIGENCE REPORTS--APPARENTLY INCLUDING TAPE RECORDINGS OF MEETINGS INSIDE THE PRESIDENTIAL MANSION--FORMED THE BASIS OF ALLEGATIONS THAT PRESIDENT PARK PERSONALLY ORDERED THE BRIBERY OF U.S. CONGRESSMEN.

8. THE STATEMENT RELEASED TODAY SAID THAT THE SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT HAS CONCLUDED THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL MANSION WAS NOT BUGGED BY U.S. INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES.

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9. SUCH ALLEGATIONS, IT SAID, WERE "FOUND TO BE GROUNDLESS AS A RESULT OF THE REPEATED AND POSITIVE CLARIFICATIONS" MADE BY HIGH-RANKING U.S. OFFICIALS THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

10. (THE OFFICIAL SOUTH KOREAN NEWS AGENCY HAPDONG SAID, "A HIGH GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL ON DEC. 20 DENIED THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS" THE ALLEGATIONS OF ELECTRONIC EAVESDROPPING BY THE UNITED STATES.)

11. (A SPOKESMAN IN WASHINGTON SAID THE STATE DEPARTMENT WOULD NEITHER CONFIRM NOR DENY REPORTS THAT PRIVATE ASSURANCES HAD BEEN GIVEN SEOUL THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.)

12. THE KOREAN FOREIGN MINISTER ALSO TOOK A DEFENSIVE, THOUGH SOMEWHAT CONCILIATORY VIEW ON THE OTHER TWO ISSUES. HE REITERATED SOUTH KOREA'S POSITION THAT TONGSUN PARK

HAD NO CONNECTION WITH THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT AND SAID THAT PARK SHOULD BE DEALT WITH UNDER U.S. LAW IF THERE WAS ANY VIOLATION ON HIS PART. AMERICAN PRESS REPORTS LINKING THE KOREAN GOVERNMENT TO THE CASE RELIED ON "GROUNDLESS ALLEGATIONS AND DISTORTED FACTS," THE STATEMENT SAID.

13. HE SAID ANOTHER PROBLEM AROSE WHEN WASHINGTON-BASED OFFICIAL KIM SANG KEUN TURNED UP IN FBI CUSTODY AFTER BEING REASSIGNED TO SEOUL. THE KOREAN AMBASSADOR TO THE UNITED STATES REQUESTED AN INTERVIEW WITH KIM TO ESTABLISH HIS PLANS AND MOTIVATIONS. "BUT, REGRETFULLY SUCH AN INTERVIEW HAS NOT BEEN REALIZED YET DUE TO SOME DIFFERENCES OF OPINION BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS REGARDING THE PROCEDURE TO BE FOLLOWED IN THIS MATTER," THE STATEMENT ADDED.

14. WASHINGTON REPORTS HAVE IDENTIFIED KIM AS THE SECOND-RANKING OFFICIAL OF THE KOREAN CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY IN THE UNITED STATES. HE IS SAID TO HAVE FEARED
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PUNISHMENT IN SEOUL AND IS NOW TALKING TO THE FBI ABOUT SOUTH KOREA'S SECRET LOBBYING.

15. (A STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID KIM, WHO INITIALLY REFUSED TO SEE SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSY OFFICIALS, HAS SINCE

AGREED TO MEET WITH THE NO. 2 OFFICIAL, KOO CHOONG WHEE. THE EMBASSY, WHICH ONCE OFFERED TO MAKE ANY OFFICIAL AVAILABLE, NOW INSISTS THAT KIM MEET WITH AMBASSADOR HAHM PYONG CHOON, THE SPOKESMAN SAID.)

16. LATER TODAY, PREMIER CHOI KYU HAH, FOREIGN MINISTER PARK AND OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS GAVE AMPLIFIED BUT STILL INCOMPLETE REPORTS OF THE INCIDENTS TO A COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY.

17. IN EXPLANATION OF THE TWO-MONTH SILENCE, THE KOREAN MINISTERS, SAID THEY TOOK "A PRUDENT AND QUIET ATTITUDE" TO AVOID HINDERING DIPLOMATIC NEGOTIATIONS, AROUSING ANTI-AMERICAN SENTIMENT AMONG THE SOUTH KOREANS AND TO PREVENT NORTH KOREA FROM EXPLOITING THE ISSUE.

18. THE VARIOUS STATEMENTS ARE MORE REMARKABLE FOR WHAT THEY OMIT THAN WHAT THEY CONTAIN. AMONG THE OMISSIONS:
--ANY INDICATION TO THE KOREAN PUBLIC OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST THE SOUTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT OR OF THE SUBSEQUENT DETERIORATION IN U.S.-SOUTH KOREAN RELATIONS.

--THAT THE SCANDAL IS NOW THE SUBJECT OF A U.S. JUSTICE DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATION AND AN INQUIRY BY THE HOUSE

ETHICS COMMITTEE.

--THAT KIM SANG KEUN IS A KCIA OPERATIVE.

19. OBSERVERS IN SEOUL BELIEVE PRESIDENT PARK FELT BOUND
TO TAKE A PUBLIC FACE-SAVING POSITION ON THE CASE. THE
GOVERNMENT HAD KEPT THE STORY TOTALLY OUT OF THE CLOSELY
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CONTROLLED PRESS UNTIL TODAY, BUT MANY HEARD REPORTS ON
VOICE OF AMERICA, JAPANESE RADIO STATIONS AND EVEN ON THE
AMERICAN FORCES KOREA NETWORK. (END TEXT)
ROBINSON

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